

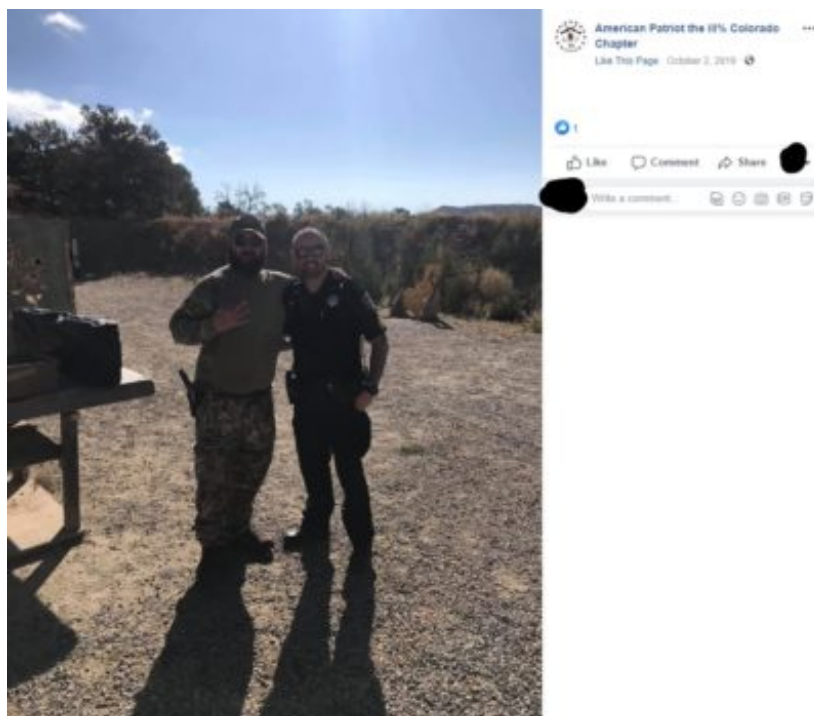
Militias Part Four: Chaffee County Gun Range a featured part of Colorado Three Percenter Group

arkvalleyvoice.com/militias-part-four-chaffee-county-gun-range-a-featured-part-of-colorado-three-percenter-group/

By Stephen Hall

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As covered in the three previous [Ark Valley Voice Modern Militia Movement](#) articles, all of the historical necessities for a “well-regulated militia” have been met through modern professional police forces and the National Guard. The question becomes: what might be the purpose of the modern militia movement?



During Ark Valley Voice’s ongoing investigation into militias and Colorado’s patriot movement, numerous photos were discovered featuring “Three Percenters” training at the Chaffee County public gun range, located next to the county landfill off U.S. 285.

The images showed five participants, one of whom appeared to be in his teens, training in various military-style tactics. In one image, all participants are seen displaying the enigmatic III% hand gesture forming a circle with the thumb and forefinger and the three remaining fingers outstretched. What is concerning is that this hand gesture is also associated with white supremacists.

The public Facebook group “American Patriot III% Colorado Chapter” is the largest of the Colorado patriot movement’s social media profiles that Ark Valley Voice recently cataloged. It hosts 5,345 followers.

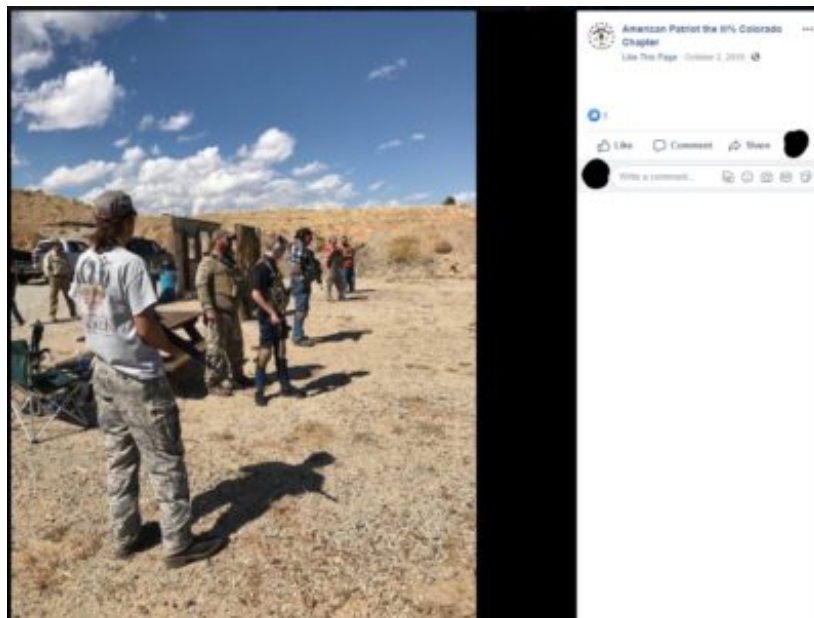
Even more concerning, however, is the appearance of a Chaffee County Sheriff's Deputy in one image. The image is on a public page and shows the deputy in uniform, but not apparently actively participating in the training.

While image of the law enforcement officer do not overtly cross over the legal line, they do run right up to the line, if not stand on it.

Other law enforcement agencies have taken strict action toward officers displaying militia paraphernalia or involved in these groups. One incident, reported by the LA Times occurred on June 3, 2020, in Orange County, California when a "conduct inquiry" was launched into a deputy's actions after he was seen wearing a Three Percenter patch on his uniform while monitoring protests.

The federal regulation governing such behavior is known as the Hatch Act. Enacted in 1939 the act has undergone several revisions keeping it up-to-date.

It prevents federal, state, and in some cases local government officials from participating in partisan political organizations while on duty or when on official government business.



Local government agencies that receive federal funding are primarily subject to the Hatch Act. Very few law enforcement agencies, especially rural ones, operate without some federal funding.

What's more, along with these striking images of law enforcement involvement, "American Patriot III% Colorado Chapter" page contains alarming political posts, some with ethnic slurs and anti-Semitic remarks.

Many of these public posts also promote violence that is specifically directed at other Americans with opposing political beliefs. Most comments are associated with equally incendiary memes and images.

A few examples from "American Patriot III% Colorado Chapter":

- "In bread leftys, Pest control soon." April 14, 2020 main page post.
- "The jew cries out in pain while he strikes you. Do your research. There's a reason this "race" is the most BTFO'd race on this planet." April 5, 2019 meme comment.
- "We'll see who's scared when you are looking at the front of my gun barrel and I'm looking over the sights." December 12, 2019 image comment.
- "So you are saying that all this just might be some kind of hoax? When it all comes out that it is indeed a fabrication of falsehoods, there should be public hangings of those "officials" who swore an oath "...against all enemies, foreign and DOMESTIC..." for the high crime of treason against the United States." December 5, 2019 image comment.



American Patriot the III% image.

The American Patriot III% group traces a direct connection to the Trump election campaign slogan of “Make America Great Again”. They appear to take the rallying cry a step further, to “Get Rid of All Socialist Politicians” superimposed over an image of Uncle Sam with a gun painted in American flag colors. The image is completed with what could be viewed as a threat; “We Are Everywhere.” The written threat — if not the implied one — is clear.

Both recent events as well as a dramatic escalation of potential violence by numerous right-wing groups document a reason for concern. The local militia involvement appears to be part of this rapidly expanding movement. Barring violations of the law, social media platforms accept and sometimes foster these groups and their incendiary activities.

Raising awareness of these activities within Chaffee county is the primary purpose for this and the previous Ark Valley Voice articles concerning the history of militias, the evolution of modern “militias” and the patriot movement, and finally the current status of Colorado’s patriot movement.

With the size of Colorado’s militia movement and its intimate relationship with Chaffee County, citizens and community leaders must decide exactly who they want protecting our freedoms. The question remains: what might be the purpose of the modern militia movement?

Chaffee County Sheriff John Spezze was contacted regarding the content of this article, and the fact that one of his deputies was identified in the militia images. Sheriff Spezze said he did not want to comment at this time but said, “We are looking into it.”

The sheriff’s response, which is contained in the “Letters to the editor” section of ark Valley Voice is also available here.